IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the following claims.

1. (currently amended) A process comprising:

forming a metal ~~interconnect~~ structure having at least one via and at least one interconnect onto a substrate, said metal ~~interconnect~~ structure extending above a surface of said ~~the~~ substrate;

forming, subsequent to said forming said ~~a~~ metal ~~interconnect~~ structure, a carbon-doped oxide (CDO) layer with a first concentration of carbon dopants therein on said substrate and filling entirely between elements of said metal ~~interconnect~~ structure; and

continuing to form, subsequent to said forming said ~~a~~ CDO layer with said ~~a~~ first concentration of carbon dopants, said CDO layer further above said metal interconnect structure with a second concentration of carbon dopants therein, wherein said ~~the~~ first concentration is higher than said ~~the~~ second concentration.

2. (currently amended) The process according to Claim 1 further comprising:

forming, subsequent to said forming said second concentration of carbon dopants, ~~continuing to form~~, said ~~the~~ CDO layer further with a third concentration of carbon dopants therein, wherein there is a linear correlation of said ~~the~~ concentration of carbon dopants between said ~~the~~ first concentration, said ~~the~~ second concentration, and said ~~the~~ third concentration.

3. (currently amended) The process according to Claim 1 further comprising:

forming said ~~the~~ CDO layer further with a third concentration of carbon dopants therein, wherein said ~~the~~ first and third concentrations are higher than said ~~the~~ second concentration.

4. (currently amended) The process according to Claim 1 further comprising:

forming said ~~the~~ CDO layer further with a third concentration of carbon dopants therein, wherein said ~~the~~ first and third concentrations are lower than said ~~the~~ second concentration.

5-6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) A process comprising:

~~forming a carbon-doped oxide (CDO) layer with a concentration of carbon dopants therein;~~

~~wherein the concentration varies substantially linearly from a higher concentration in an initially-deposited portion of the CDO layer to a lower concentration in a subsequently-deposited portion of the CDO layer.~~

forming a first layer of carbon-doped oxide (CDO) on a substrate, said first layer of CDO having a first concentration of carbon dopants therein;

forming a second layer of CDO having a second concentration of carbon dopants therein above said first layer of CDO; and

forming a third layer of CDO having a third concentration of carbon dopants therein above said second layer of CDO, wherein said first concentration and said third concentration are higher than said second concentration.

8-9. (cancelled)

10. (currently amended) A process comprising: ~~The process according to Claim 7 wherein the concentration varies between about 1 percent and about 20 percent by atomic mass.~~

forming a first layer of carbon-doped oxide (CDO) on a substrate, said first layer of CDO having a first concentration of carbon dopants therein;

forming a second layer of CDO having a second concentration of carbon dopants therein above said first layer of CDO; and

forming a third layer of CDO having a third concentration of carbon dopants therein above said second layer of CDO, wherein said first concentration and said third concentration are lower than said second concentration.

11-30. (cancelled)